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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 27, 1985

William J. Casey
Director
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear Bill:

Just a brief note to pass along a transcript of my recent speech before the National Press Club on Central America.

As I know that we share an interest in resolving the political crisis in Central America, I thought that you might find my remarks to be of some interest. I would be most interested in any comments that you might have in response to the issues that I raised. Please stay in touch.

Sincerely,

Dave Durenberger
United States Senator

DD:soc
Enclosures

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Questions and Answers
following Senator Durenberger's
address to the
National Press Club
Topic: Central America

March 26,1985

Question: Senator Durenberger, the response so far to the UNIR initiative, the response by the Sandinistas, has been political harassment and intimidation. What does that say to you about the prospects for a political reconciliation inside Nicaragua?

Answer: I think there is a difficulty in anticipating reconciliation until the position of the United States has been determined. If the Sandinistas are able, within Nicaragua, to paint those Nicaraguans outside of Nicaragua as supporters of a United States policy that the Nicaraguans believe to be detrimental to that country, there is no reason for the Sandinistas to negotiate. If, on the other hand we would make clear what in effect is in it for the Sandinistas to negotiate with the UNIR, I suspect they would do it.

Question: If Nicaragua is "a potential strategic threat" to the United States, the threat that you indicate that it might be and a military threat to its neighbors, under what conditions would you support direct U.S. military action against Nicaragua?

Answer: Although I'm not an expert on going to war, I would support it on the condition that I've tried to outline in this paper today. And that is in support of regional treaty objectives, that is, the real pact and the OAS charter. That is why I recommend that those who have the deepest concern about its urgency, those who have the deepest concern about the failure of the democratic revolution in Central America are the other five Central American Countries. If they are of the opinion that Nicaragua has failed in its commitment to the Organization of American States, it is they, with our backing, who can go to the OAS and ask for some appropriate relief, whatever the OAS might determine that to be. If at some point in time that relief contemplates military involvement and contemplates the involvement of the United States under the charter, I would approve our supplying that kind of assistance.

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Question: A rather broad question, is Central America a Vietnam reincarnated?

Answer: Well, only in a sense, I'll give you the geographic line and the proximity line and all that sort of thing and distinguish it in those terms. Where we have the semblance of Vietnam is in either the second or third policy I outlined in the speech, and that is, how far are we willing to go and what are we willing to do. A larger problem for us in Vietnam was never drawing the appropriate line in the sand and letting every body know where they were and what we would do. If you don't know what will happen if that airfield is built, if you don't know what will happen if MIGs are delivered in Nicaragua, if you don't what will happen if you continue this or that course of action as far as the United States response is concerned, then you have the same kind of political problem that you had associated with Vietnam.

Question: Do you believe the President will insist on a vote on covert aid even when and others say he can't win? And, do think overt aid to the rebels would really have a better chance?

Answer: I have hopes that by our getting together this noon we may stimulate some course alteration on the part of the administration's policy. I have been very pleased with the interest and the concern by the national security policy makers and the foriegn policy makers in the administration since mid-January in the various activities in which the administration might engage that might gain Congressional support. So, I frankly am hopeful that this particular sense of direction, if implemented in various ways by the administration, will make uneccessary any more covert activity or covert action finding approval, and that we can also get rid of the Section 8066 language which was designed in congressional conferences to make sure we don't do things that the members of Congress don't even know we're doing. I suspect we will not have to face a request for funding, but I also would be supportive if the administration could come with a change of policy I would certainly be supportive of getting rid of the 8066 language and providing them with funding for some other kind of more appropriate policy.

Question: Senator, the Reagan administration apparently believes that Congress will ultimately approve the $14 million for the Contras, because Congress not has been able to come up itself with an alternative. What is your reaction to that?

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Answer: Well, I haven't seen fewer than 535 congressional alternatives, which presents any president with a problem and a large attitudinal headache as far as the Congress is concerned, and I don't blame the President. I don't think we are going to come up with an alternative. I think the administration is going to have work with the Congress to develop an alternative policy which may be implemented by way of providing some assistance to those Nicaraguans who were part of the original revolution, whether they were Nicaraguans under ARDE banner in the South or the FDN banner in the North. But, I am sure we are going to stop short of providing lethal assistance in one kind or another. But, I don't think that has anything to do with the $14 million dollars, I think we need to decide how many dollars it takes to support these people in a non-lethal sense and in effect ask for a supplemental appropriation for those dollars. Just get rid of that $14 million thing because it has nothing to do with policy whatsoever.

Question: Senator Durenberger, do you want the Central American countries to take over funding of the Contras and would that be legal under the Rio pact?

Answer: It probably is not legal under the Rio pact. I guess I wouldn't be the judge of that. I don't expect and I hope I did not suggest in this paper, that I feel we should appropriately designate the FDN as the true representatives at this stage of the Nicaraguan revolution, and that if we aren't going to fund them that Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador or Panama fund them. I think it is more important that those five countries go to the OAS and express in that forum their concerns about the violations of the OAS principles under which that Sandinista government was given transitional approval or recognition than that they provide money or other means of support to the rebels inside Nicaragua.

Question: Senator, is it possible for Congress to prevent the White House from funnelling aid to the Contras, either through other governments or through private parties?

Answer: Well, I'm not sure about the private party business. Somebody's going to have to get a legal consultant in here to answer that one. But, I am quite convinced that we are able to prevent it in terms of other governments in the same way that we are able to prevent any direct government involvement on our part. The way we prevent it is through the intelligence oversight committees. We have made sure that when there is a directive that says U.S. money cannot be spent on

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U.S. assistance for certain objectives, those objectives are not being accomplished indirectly by going to third parties. I am convinced as chairman of the Senate Committee that they are not going to third parties to go around the congressional prohibiton.

Question: Do you belive that military action by the United States is inevitable given the current drift of policy and events in Central Amnerica?

Answer: No, I don't think it's inevitable. But, I think we had better make clear that it is possible. If we stand around saying we will never ever take any kind of action to help the other five countries in Central America or to support the OAS or to support the Rio pact, then the Sandinistas have no reason to negotiate. At least we must take the position that it is possible. I guess I am just hopeful or optomistic by nature, that it is less than likely that we would have to use that kind of force.

Question: Senator Durenberger, from your view on the Intelligence Committee, do you see significant convincing evidence that the Sandinista government is now actively exporting revolution arms to Honduras, Guatemala, Costa Rica, El Salvador?

Answer: Yes, in fact, I am aware that they are involved in other countries. It's not on the same scale as the Cubans have been, perhaps, but then they haven't been at as long as the Cubans have either. But, yes, there is, to me, clear and convincing evidence of their involvement in those countries.

Question: What is the nature of that involvement so far as you can go? What kinds of arms are they shipping to other countries?

Answer: You have gotten me to go as far as I'm going to go.

Question: If one of the conditions for the Sandinistas to continue to receive aid from the Soviet block is to export leftist revolution to its neighbors, how can the United States expect it to quit doing so?

Answer: Well you can't expect it to quit doing so as long as we play patsy, if you will, in our role as a big threat that never delivers on its threat -- I would imagine they are going to continue in that particular course of action. Which is the whole purpose of trying to enunciate some relatively tough set of principles that we need to commit ourselves to and that we need to make clear we are going to follow up on. And more importantly, to give it a positive rather than a negative

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cast. One of the great things everybody will tell you about Ronald Reagan is he is such a terrific communicator, that all we have to do is unleash the President on the American people and like the Messiah he can get us to believe things that we didn't necessarily believe. That problem however is this -- is one of the wonderful things about the American people that if the President gives them a vision of the shining city on the hill they will be so optomistic about getting to that hill, that shining city, that despite the fact that this president doubled the national debt and almost tripled the debt service, he wins an election that says he can balance the budget. So when he puts things in a positive, affirmative, cast this President has the wonderful ability of leading the American people towards the shining city on the hill. But when he puts on a negative cast it lasts about as long as your fear that your community is going to be invaded by a lot of people who speak Spanish. If they don't come in a week or they don't come in two weeks you stop believing that that is the threat. And so, in large part, what I hope I accomplished today at least with this audience, is to recommend that the value of Ronald Reagan is putting a positive, affirmative cast on our policy and not always this negative, anti-, bad guys/good guys cast on our policy vis-a-vis Central America.

Question: One of the chief complaints against the Sandinista government, Senator, is that it has engaged in a huge military build-up and that one of our conditions is that, in effect, build-down this military power. But, in any dictatorship sustained by force how can one realistically expect it to disarm itself?

Answer: Well if you're going to maintain a dictatorship, you're not going to disarm. That is how simple it is. How did Costa Rica disarm? They disarmed when they went from a dictatorship to a democracy. They gave their navy back to the United States, I guess they had four ships in their navy, no, they converted their navy to a fishing fleet. They gave their air force back too, they didn't want to go the expense of sending up here to learn how to fly. And they converted their army into a sort of police force and a 4,000 member civil defense organization. That's how you do it. If you're willing to convert from a dictatorship to a democracy you can do what Costa Rica did. And you can then even make friends with dictatorships as they were able to do for some period of time until those dictatorships became, as in the case of Somosa and Nicaragua, a serious threat to Costa Rica. At that point the Costa Ricans were very instrumental of the overthrow of Somosa. So, you can negotiate the Sandinistas to bring down their supply of, particularly, armor which is the big threat. I mean, there is no reason they need all those tanks and all that armor for that

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little country unless they're headed for Mexico through Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala, unless they're headed for the Panama Canal. So, you can perhaps negotiate down that supply to some agreed regional parity and still maintain some form of a dictatorship if you wanted to do that. I don't think a dictator is going to do that. So, in part, what you will be doing is negotiating with the Sandinistas a different electoral process which hopefully will result in a different political system in that country.

Question: Several related questions about collective action. Are you disappointed that the Contadora countries have failed to make visible progress in resolving the Nicarguan problem. And, what hope do you hold out for such collective action against Nicaragua?

Answer: Obviously, the Contadora process was an effort toward regionalizing a solution. And so, it's a disappointment to all of us that that kind of approach with Colombia, Venezuela, Panama and Mexico, that kind of a regional solution, has not so far been succesful. However, I have come to the conclusion after watching it work for a couple of years, that it's not going to be successful. I mean, it's an imposed solution in a sense, if Mexico on one side and Colombia, Venezuela and Panama on another side, even though they may have good working relationships in an indirect sense with the rest of Central America, are going to come up with a solution. It has the potential of being a gutless kind of a solution. Until Costa Rica and Salvador and Honduras and Guatemala and Panama start speaking as a region for a region, the way they do to all of us when we go through their countries they start saying in public what they say to all of us in private about the value of democracy. There isn't a better way to negotiate than with the true members of that region.

Question: Senator Durenberger, in your speech, were you suggesting that the United States should one, stop trade with Nicaragua; two, sever diplomatic relations; three, blockade or quarantine Nicaragua to prevent the import of arms there?

Answer: I wouldn't rule out any one of those three. But, what I'm saying is that it has to be in the framework of a regional or an OAS solution. I don't suggest it as a unilateral activity on our part. Because a lot of the unilateral activity we have engaged in so far has had elements of that in it, and it has not yet been successful because we have never really drawn the line beyond which we would permit the Sandinistas to walk

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and I think that is because we have never had the open support of the Hondurans, Costa Ricans and others to do it. So, would I rule out any one of those three, economic, blockade, or quarantive of some kind? No, I would not, as long as its done within a regional context.

Question: As a first step would you be willing to sever diplomatic relations?

Answer: Well, I raised in the speech the question as to why we maintain diplomatic relations. I have raised that as a member of the Select Committee and received less that satisfactory answers to it. I'm not saying we ought to sever diplomatic relations, I guess I am saying to my government, why is it so valuable that we maintain relations with a government which we believe does not meet the standards that they committed themselves to when the OAS gave them a transitional recognition in July or June of 1979. Why? Perhaps we have to consider recognizing the UNIR, something like that, if they will adhere to those principles, but I'm not insisting that that is the way we go, I just think it is a question the American people are asking. If they're so bad, then why do we recognize them.

Question: In various questions and opportunities that the President has had from the reporters mainly about whether he wants overthrow the Sandinista government, the President always stops just short of saying that is the goal of American policy. Do you have any doubt in your mind that that is his goal?

Answer: Yes, I have a lot of doubt in my mind. I don't think it's his goal to overthrow the Sandinistas. I don't know that he has any particular reason to believe that on an individual basis any one of those people (with a couple three exceptions that I don't want to name) are not bad Nicaraguans. It is when nine of them get together that they become a problem for us. In viewing this through the covert action over the years, I don't believe it was ever an explicit part of our policy, or even implicit, that our objective is to throw those nine people out of office. I think our clear objective since we amended the intelligence finding in September of 1983 -- and then made some eight months of boo-boos by not finding out how it was implemented -- it has been our clear objective to enforce the democratic principles that are embodied in the OAS recognition and the commitment of the Sandinistas to that recognition. And, when November 2nd came and went last year, and we had an undemocratic electoral process in Nicaragua, we had every right to say "hey that isn't what we were talking about," and if appropriate, to increase our pressure to restore a more democratic political process in that country.

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Question: Senator Durenberger, if we could switch geers for a moment, do you think President Reagan's response to the killing of an American Army major by the Soviet's has been strong enough or is there an abscence of outrage in his response.

Answer: Well the only thing that is harder to answer than that by way of a characterization of the difficulty of the job of being the President of the United States, would be his reaction to the Korean airliner. I mean there are times when other than going to the top of the White House and screeming at the top of your head and tearing your hair and so forth, you cannot satisfactorily in words demostrate your outrage. It is one of those very unfortunate circumstances in which there is no particular form of retaliation. To say that you are not only outraged, but that you are going to take a particular course of action, if it ever happens again. I'm sure that behind the scenes what happens if that kind of an incident gets repeated is being discussed currently with the Soviet Union.

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Senator Dave Durenberger
U.S. Senator for Minnesota

REMARKS OF
SENATOR DAVE DURENBERGER
BEFORE
THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB

MARCH 26, 1985

Some years ago, a senior United States government official was reported to have told a South American diplomat that the "axis of history" ran from Moscow through Berlin and London to New York, and did not encompass Latin America.

That narrow vision of international politics is no longer held by most informed people. Today, as never before, people in this country are following with intense interest developments in the nations of Central and South America.

But if we are interested, we are also confused, for we lack a frame of reference which can tell us what kind of policy to pursue. Our government appears to be reacting to events, rather than carrying out a strategy with specific goals and standards by which to measure progress. When things don't go the way we expect, we lose patience and try something different. When we lose confidence, we try something rash. When threatened, we overreact. When not threatened, we lose interest.

So, today, Americans are numbed by a plethora of proposals and counterproposals based on the contradictory views of various experts and witnesses. Americans are confused by the strength of Administration rhetoric and the absence of Administration action. They are confused by congressional procrastination, argument, and lack of consistency. They are looking for something we have seldom brought to Central American policy -- coherence and a sense of vision.

We largely ignored events in Central American until the Nicaraguan people overthrew the Somoza regime, and shortly thereafter the Salvadoran military deposed General Romero in a reformist coup. Then, when we tried to react, we found that our policy was defined by a host of after-thoughts posing as Congressional amendments. Instead of crafting an integrated policy, we adopted a series of policy fragments. We looked at the region through a kaleidoscope, which offers different views when turned to the right or the left, and not a telescope.

We adopted the Helms amendment prohibiting the use of American foreign aid in support of land reform. We adopted the Dodd amendment which demanded a regular paper exercise on behalf of human rights. We adopted the Boland amendment which tried to link tangible assistance to the intangible motives of the Nicaraguan opposition. And when we found that this was fruitless, we adopted Section 8066 of the Continuing Resolution, which holds American action hostage to an ill-timed vote on an ill-planned program in support of a policy which no one understands.

I submit to you today that we can no longer afford a kaleidoscopic approach to foreign policy.

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If Central America is important to this nation's future -- and it is -- then it is time for the public, the Congress, and the Executive Branch to begin shaping a long-term affirmative policy. We need to stop confusing instruments with ends; intentions with accomplishments; rhetoric with reality; and Congressional micromanagement with Congressional oversight. We need instead to ask ourselves what is happening today in Central America, what is likely to happen tomorrow, what we would like to see happen in the future, and what we can do about it.

Perhaps the place to start is with the democratic revolution which is being carried out every day throughout Latin America by millions of people who are demanding, and obtaining, the political and economic rights which they have long been denied.

Today no repressive government can remain in power in Central America unless it receives outside support. But equally, no democratic movement can flourish in Central America unless it receives outside support. Much of that support must come from the Latin American democracies themselves. They cannot be detached observers -- critical or non-commital in public, yet supportive in private. They must participate in the democratic revolution for they will benefit the most from its success and suffer the most from its failure.

When I first went to Central America 12 years ago, only Costa Rica had a functioning democracy and a tradition of social justice. Today, Costa Rica is not alone. Panama, Honduras, and El Salvador have democratically-elected civilian governments that have made major progress in eliminating a legacy of injustice, economic stagnation, and the arbitrary exercise of power. Even in Guatemala, a country which for years stood apart because of its feudal brutality, there are clear signs of progress, and presidential elections are scheduled for October.

At the same time, these developments are not irreversible. El Salvador's respected president, Jose Napoleon Duarte, must contend with the remnants of yesterday's rightist dictatorship, while fighting the insurgency of the left. President Suazo of Honduras, though not significantly threatened by the left, is facing deteriorating economic conditions which may create uncontrollable pressure on his government. The Hondurans must also resolve the dilemma of strengthening a military which offers protection against the Marxists to the south but which poses a threat to democracy in its own right. Costa Rica's economy has been ravaged by the oil shocks of 1973 and 1979, by a decline in the terms of trade, by the burden of harboring thousands of refugees from Nicaragua, and by the government's historic generosity. In Panama, economic conditions are precarious and democracy is threatened by a nascent Marxist movement waiting on stage left and the prospect of a reactionary military waiting on stage right.

The question facing the American people today is whether we ignore these realities or act concert with others to help the emerging democracies strengthen themselves. In the past, we fought change; now we must decide whether to ignore it or to bolster it. The old style military governments are evolving into democracy. The Marxist insurgencies are losing.

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In every country but one, the democratic revolution is being carried out, however precariously. That country is Nicaragua.

The Sandinista National Directorate has stolen a democratic revolution from the citizens of Nicaragua as surely as the Bolsheviks stole the Russian revolution against the Czar. It has set out on a course of subversion abroad and repression at home which has disturbed and frightened democratic leaders throughout the region.

Nicaragua is a throwback to the old pattern. Today, as in 1979, the government faces international hostility, economic disaster, a population grown restive, and an increasing threat from a military insurgency supported by a democratic opposition. So if we are consistent in our support for a democratic revolution, we should see Nicaragua for what it is -- another Central American dictatorship which is doomed to failure unless it is kept alive by outside help.

The fundamental question, therefore, is whether we believe that the democratic revolution should move forward throughout Central America. If so, we must ask ourselves where the obstacles to this movement are found. One place is Managua, where a government is bent on throttling the democratic revolution at home and reversing it in the neighboring states.

Inside Nicaragua, the Sandinista National Directorate is resorting to ever greater forms of control and repression. Food is rationed by FSLN block committees. The behavior and beliefs of every citizen are subject to close monitoring to ensure that there is no deviation from the party line. Censorship, forced relocation, and orchestrated mob behavior are further divorcing the people from the Sandinistas. The list of exiles therefore grows bigger very day.

Nicaragua's behavior toward others is no better. Nicaragua is providing material, financial, and political support to insurgents in El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, and Guatemala. This support takes the form of arms, ammunition, communications coordination, logistics, training, propaganda, medical assistance, and advice. In addition, Nicaragua poses a direct military threat to her neighbors in Central America with an arsenal which exceeds those of all the other Central American countries combined. Finally, the emerging client relationship between Nicaragua and the Soviet-Cuban axis represents a potential strategic and tactical threat to the United States.

That's why the United States has persistently raised four points with the Sandinistas in its bilateral talks at Manzanillo. These are the same points which lie at the heart of the multilateral Contadora negotiations.

First, we want Nicaragua to cease its support for insurgencies in other countries.

Second, we want the National Directorate to adhere to the principles of the OAS Charter, and to honor the promises they made in 1979 in return for OAS recognition as a transitional government.

Third, we want Nicaragua to reduce the size of its military to parity with that of its neighbors, and to refrain altogether from obtaining or seeking advanced military technology. The economies in Central America cannot afford an arms race spurred

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by a Nicaraguan bid for hegemony. But the democracies in Central America cannot thrive in the face of a military threat from a state which, unlike Cuba, is located in the heart of their small isthmus.

Finally, we want to see a reduction in Nicaraguan dependence on the Soviets, the Cubans, and clients like the PLO or Libya. Neither this nation nor any other nation in the hemisphere can tolerate another Soviet military outpost.

As important as these four points are, they do not comprise a genuine foreign policy. Instead, they represent problems which need an immediate solution. In other words, we find ourselves once again reacting after the fact to events which appear beyond our control. What we need is a comprehensive policy which can provide a road map for the future.

Thus far, the Administration has failed to provide such a road map. True, it has repeatedly announced three concrete goals which lie at the heart of its monetary requests to Congress: support for democracy against insurgency; economic assistance to help stabilize declining economies; and military assistance to contain the Nicaraguan threat. But these are only short-term reactions to immediate and visible threats. They do not tell us what we want the future to look like and because of that, programs and proposals which should be evaluated in terms of their contribution to progress become debated as ends in themselves.

We are not demonstrably undertaking a significant, long-term and supportable policy which will define the Untied States role in Central America for the future. And the role played by President Reagan in this issue only contributes to the difficulty.

The President has spoken to the public a number of times about Central America. Until recently, however, he has done so only in terms of such issues as the so called "feet people". He has not made clear the affirmative policy which we should adopt, but instead has spoken only in terms of what we should oppose.

As a result, the President himself has to some degree become the issue. The President is usually seen as the source of foreign policy. Congress, therefore, debates, supports or refutes a man, not a policy. But the true issue here is a long-term strategy and higher-order goals, not the elections in 1986 or 1988.

Clearly, it is not the obligation of Congress to develop such a policy. That is the responsibility of the Executive Branch, and it is the Executive Branch which is far better prepared to undertake such detailed work. But unless a genuine policy is developed -- soon and well -- the Executive will leave itself open to defeat by a Congress which will begin to impose artificial restraints on this country. We cannot afford kaleidescopic micro-management of the sort that gave us the Clark Amendment, the artificial box-checking exercise of human rights certification, or the fencing of funding which was appropriated for the CIA.

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The vacuum created by the failure to elaborate an affirmative policy has led to the ridiculous spectacle of alternative visits to our Congress and our communities by the FSLN and the FDN in a protracted morality play designed to gain short-term propaganda advantages. In Nicaragua, they know there is no real US policy, and all sides are therefore are engaged in a form of ritualized theatrics designed to create one by default.

It is time for this government to take charge of its own policy. What we must begin to do is to establish some guiding principles. These principles can provide a context for debate, and establish standards by which we can measure success. It is vital that such a policy be directed uniformly toward all of Central America, and not just the country which attracts our attention at the moment. Central America is a tightly interdependent region, and the democratic revolution cannot succeed if it is hampered in any country, whether because of leftist or rightist repression. We must build into our policy the elements of consistency, accountability, credibility, and consonance with law which we demand of a foreign policy elsewhere. And above all else, we should not confuse the instruments of policy with policy itself.

I believe that our policy should be shaped by six general principles.

The first principle: We must recognize that a long-term commitment to policy requires the active support of the public and its Congress. This means that a policy must be built on an affirmative vision of the future, and must avoid senseless confrontation over peripheral issues like the paramilitary program. If the President makes a $14 million program the centerpiece of his policy, he will only stoke the fires of controversy in this country. Win or lose, the game will ultimately be the Sandinistas', not ours.

The previous formula for covert assistance is simply at a dead end. The disupte between Congress and the Administration has been over whether money should be appropriated to resume covert, military support of the Nicaraguan insurgents. Congress won't be party to the illogical and illegal absurdity of pretending that we are not providing military assistance when it is widely and publicly known that we are.

The insistence on covert aid convinces the Central Americans that we are not openly committed to our objectives and, therefore, not steadfast. Moreover, the American people don't understand why we have to act in an underhanded way if our policy objectives are right. Finally , it is not clear why covert aid is the critical action upon which our policy must stand or fall. The controversy is joined on the wrong issue -- the method rather than the goal of supporting the FDN -- and a negative vote on that issue implies, incorrectly, that Congress and the Administration are not in agreement on the need to oppose the Sandanistas and all they stand for. Confrontation should be in Managua, not in Washington.

The second principle: Our policy must have the element of credibility which comes from an evident willingness to undertake difficult, and potentially expensive actions. Without credibility, our actions raise doubts and questions.

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There is considerable hand-wringing about the arms buildup in Nicaragua, but it continues. Why, people must ask, do we permit it? Surely, $14 million in covert aid to the FDN is not going to make any difference. We assert that MG-21s will not be permitted, yet the construction of Puenta Huete Airfield continues, and we permit the deployment of sophisticated MI-24 helicopters. Have we drawn a line on military equipment? If so, where? If not, why not?

Equally, we claim to support the democratic opposition in Nicaragua. If so, people must ask, where is the tangible sign of that suport? If we oppose the regime in Managua, why do we buy Nicaraguan beef and bananas when Honduras could use our trade? And if we truly feel that the Sandinistas have lost their legitimacy because of their failure to adhere to the conditions for their recognition by the OAS, why do we continue diplomatic relations?

Thus far, our rhetoric has vastly exceeded our actions. The longer this continues, the more certain that nobody -- democratic ally or Sandinista ideologue -- will believe that the U.S. is serious about defending its interest in the short-term or advancing them in the long.

The third principle: We should make greater use of the economic tools at our disposal. Our greatest resource is not our ability to arm people, but to feed them, and to help them develop sound and growing economies.

To this day, we continue to let protectionism dominate our dealings with the Central American economies. We continue to parcel out humanitarian and development assistance in small and infrequent doses. We continue to focus on the short-term gain, not the long-term good.

Economic stability goes hand in hand with political stability. The sounder a nation's economy, the more it can resist aggression or subversion. It is in our own national interest to make a significant commitment to economic development in Central America.

We have the economic capacity, the strategic interest, and the plan of action to do so. But rather than moving ahead with the urgently-needed Jackson Plan, Congress has wasted its time and undercut our credibility by engaging in kaleidoscopic policy -- making with a string of haphazard amendments. It is time to move forward on the Jackson Plan, and to stop distracting ourselves wtih targets of political opportunity.

The fourth principle: We must make clear that our support for the democratic revolution means that we are willing to live with diversity so long as a nation's core values involve a commitment to the democratic process.

Policy disagreements among democracies are ultimately less important than their adherence to common values. Our relations with many genuine democracies have ocassionally been strained. But at no time have we had a fundamental disagreement over vital and core issues with a true democracy. All democracies have a strong community of interest against tyranny, and it is tyranny in its most naked form that we spend billions each year to deter.

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Governments do not have to look like ours to be democratic, nor do they have to sign off on the U.S. policy line. Yet too often in the past, we have signalled that by "democratic," we mean only pro-U.S. and anti-communist. Too often, we have failed to support social justice when the basic choice has been between reform and tyranny.

If the Sandinistas adjust their policies in the ways we have outlined at Manzanillo and elsewhere, and manifest a commitment to the democratic process, we should be willing to develop close and supportive ties with Nicaragua. But we should also be prepared to isolate Nicaragua if the Sandinistas continue on a collision course wtih their neighbors. Recently, the UNIR offered to lay down its arms and undertake unconditional talks on national reconciliation, with the Church acting as mediator. This could be the Nicaraguan counterpart to President Duarte's dramatic meeting at La Palma, and could represent the start of a process of democratization. The response of the Sandinista National Directorate should shape our policy decisions.

The fifth principle: Any policy which we undertake must be predicated on Central American unity and leadership. This is not our struggle alone, and if we attempt to make it so we are due for frustration.

It is time for those who have undertaken the democratic revolution to stand up for the principles of democracy throughout the region. If the nations of Central America do not act together, they risk collapsing one by one. The region is tightly interdependent, and it cannot continue the democratic revolution, unless it acts in a united way.

It is understandable, given the long history of US neglect, that the democracies would be reluctant to take the lead in a policy designed to bring to Nicaragua the processes which have taken root in Costa Rica and elsewhere. Nobody would want to risk further intimidation by Nicaragua in a hopeless quest. So it is vital that the United States make clear that, if the nations of the region undertake collective action, we will meet our obligations under the OAS Charter and the Rio Treaty.

Regional collective action is a tool we have simply overlooked thus far, preferring to rely on unilateral programs and declarations. Article 25 of the OAS Charter, and Articles 6 and 8 of the Rio Pact, provide a sound legal and diplomatic basis for individual and collective action against a country which engages in either direct military incursion or in agression by indirect means. A reliance on these principles and provisions will make clear that the problem is real, and not simply an ideological difference between Republicans and Sandinistas.

Moreover, a declaration of collective action makes clear that it is Latins themselves, and not the Yanquis, who are concerned. We cannot afford to revive the image of the collossus to the north. And I am certain that political leaders like Presidents Duarte and Monge are far more effective in obtaining US support than the parade of FDN military commanders who have recently come through Washington.

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The sixth, and last, principle: We should be cautious about reliance on tools that can only support a political goal, not define one. Two such tools are military action and negotiations.

We should demonstrate that our commitment to the region is political and durable. As part of that commitment, we should make clear our willingness to provide military assistance in accordance with our Rio Pact obligations, but only as requested by the Rio Pact members themselves. We should avoid the unilateral impulse to push until somebody yells "uncle." Military action should never be ruled out. But no such action can be undertaken without a clear consensus in this country and in the region.

Equally, we must keep open the door to negotiations with the government of Nicaragua, but we must realize that in every case, bilaterally and unilaterally, they have negotiated with a cynical and unproductive attitude. We can no longer base our policy on an assumption that the Sandinistas have a motivation or inclination to willingly cede any of their objectives, inside or outside their country. We must understand that their objective remains consolidation of power -- an objective they will not willingly concede through negotiations unless our diplomacy is framed in terms of a clear enunciation of our long-term goals, and backed by sufficient strength to express our will.

In summary, no element of policy, whether economic assistance or covert action, can be intelligently discussed unless we have first decided upon the broad principles we are seeking to advance. Only then can our debate about Central America cease to be artificial and artificially narrow.

It is unusual that the Chairman of the Intelligence Committee should address these points, for customarily intelligence is supposed to inform the policy-maker, not shape policy. But the means chosen by the Administration to pursue policy in Central America have thrust both the CIA and the oversight committees with the public debate. We can return to our traditional roles when we are offered a policy to support.

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